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VEN. JOHN DUNS SCOTUS

HIS LIFE AND WORKS

EDWIN DORZWEILER, O. M. CAP., A. M.

JOHN Duns Scotus is the great Franciscan whose influence on philosophy and theology continues to this day. He lived and taught at Oxford, Paris, and Cologne, and wrote a number of works. An Oxford document[1] yields this bit of information: on July 26, 1300, the Provincial of the English Franciscan province requested the Bishop of Lincoln to confer the faculty of hearing confession upon twenty-two of his subjects. In the list submitted by the Provincial we read, in the sixteenth place, the name of "Johannes Douns." The jurisdiction was granted to eight only; Scotus was among those to whom it was denied.

Another important document makes mention of Duns. It is a letter of Gonsalvus de Vallebona, General of the Order, addressed to the Guardian of the Franciscan Convent in Paris, and bearing the date of November 18 (XIV Kal. Dec.), 1304.[2] The Guardian is asked to present two Friars of the English Province to the University of Paris for the doctor's degree. The letter continues to speak of Scotus in this wise: "dilectum in Christo patrem Johannem Scotum, de cuius vita laudabili, scientia excellenti ingenioque subtilissimo aliisque insignibus conditionibus suis partim experientia longa, partim fama quae ubique divulgata est, informatus sum ad plenum, dilectioni vestrae assigno, etc."

The illustrious teacher died at Cologne, November 8, 1308. A tablet containing the names of the deceased brethren at Cologne bears the inscription: "D. P. Fr. Johannes Scotus, sacrae theologaie professor, doctor subtilis nominatus, quondam lector Coloniae, qui obiit anno 1308, VI Idus Novembris."[3]

According to Wadding[4] and Hugo Cavellus[5] the Subtle Doctor was born in 1274. This is, however, scarcely tenable. In

1 A. Wood, "Antiquities of the City of Oxford," 1890, II, 389.

2 Petrus Rodulphius, "Historiarum seraphicae religionis lib. tres," Venetiis, 1589, f. 325v; Wadding, "Annales Min. ad ann. 1304," n. 32; Denifle, "Chart. Univ. Paris.," II, 117; Little, "The Grey Friars in Oxford," Oxford, 1892, 38.

3 Waddng, "Vita Scoti, Opera Omnia Scoti," I, ¶34.

4 "Vita Scoti," beginning of Scoti....in I et II Sent. quaestiones, Antverp. 1620.

5 Ehrle, "Archiv fuer Litt. u. KG," etc., VI, 129 Annot.

1300 Scotus was recommended by his Provincial as a candidate for the jurisdiction of hearing confession. Now the Constitution of the Order of 1292 prescribed[6] that no Friar be authorized to hear confession before he had completed his thirtieth year. Accordingly Scotus must have been at least thirty years old at the time, and hence was born not later than 1270. When Seeberg[7] thinks that Scotus was born between 1265-1270, he is still safeguarding the old traditions which tell us that the Subtle Doctor died young.

England, Scotland, and Ireland contend for the honor of having produced Duns Scotus. Hubert Klug, O. M. Cap.,[8] cites a number of good reasons in favor of Scotland, and Cardinal Ehrle and A. Callebaut, O. F. M.,[9] hold the same opinion. Cardinal Ehrle warns against concluding to the birthplace from the name Duns or Douns. He claims that "Johannes de Duns" is very rare in the early MSS., while this form of designation was the ordinary one in those days.

The childhood and education of the Franciscan Master are wrapped in darkness. William of Ware[10] is commonly regarded as the teacher of Duns. However, Father Pelster, S. J., has shown that this is by no means certain.[11] Nor have we any record of when and where Scotus entered the Order of St. Francis. Scotus lived and taught at Oxford. On the strength of an old codex Pelster concludes that Scotus left England for Paris not later than the autumn of 1302, and that he remained at the University of Paris till 1304, in which year he was presented as a candidate for the doctorate. Recently A. Callebaut, O. F. M., has advanced the novel opinion that Scotus studied at Paris from about 1293-1296. He has chiefly two reasons for his opinion. Gonsalvus de Vallebona states in the letter quoted above that he was fully acquainted with Scotus from an "experientia longa." Where did he make this acquaintance? At the University of Paris, for it has been ascertained that Gonsalvus taught there during the last decade of the 13th century. The presence of Scotus in Paris at this time is further

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6 "Die Theologie des Johannes Duns Scotus," Leipzig, 1900, 38.
7 "Franziskanische Studien," II, 1915, 377-385.
8 "Archiv. Franc. Hist." X, 1917, 3-16; XIII, 1920, 78-88.
9 De Wulf, "Histoire de la philosophie medievale," 1912, 450; Ueberweg-Baumgartner, "Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie der patristischen und scholastichen Zeit," Berlin, 1915, 515.
10 "Franziskanische Studien," X, 1923, 2 ss.
11 "Archiv. Franc. Hist.," XVII, 1924, 3-12.

made probable, if not certain, by a statute of the University prescribing that no one be allowed lecture on the Sentences who had not completed nine years in the study of theology, in the case of mendicants, four years at the University of Paris and five in the schools of the Order. And we know that Scotus taught at Paris in 1302. Thus new light is thrown on the letter of Gonsalvus. Contrary to common opinion Pelster holds that Scotus did not go from Paris to Cologne, but returned to his province in England to complete his chief work, the *Opus Oxoniense*. In 1308 Scotus was sent to Cologne. There he died in the same year in the odor of sanctity.

A complete edition of the works of Scotus, in 12 folio volumes, was first published by Wadding at Lyons. The commentaries of Lycetus, Cavellus, Poncius, and Hiquaeus were included. In 1891-1895 a reprint of Wadding's edition appeared at Paris, in 26 volumes 4to. Not all the writings ascribed to Scotus in these editions are authentic. The following are certainly authentic: *Opus Oxoniense, Reportata Parisiensia, De Primo Principio, Quodlibeta, Quaestiones super XII Libros Metaphysicos Aristotelis.* The following are not authentic: *De Rerum Principio, Theoremata, De Perfectione Statuum, Conclusiones Metaphysicae, Grammatica Speculativa, Meteorologicorum Libri IV, Expositio in VIII Libros Physicorum.* The rest are either spurious or doubtful.

A critical edition of the works of Scotus is the desideratum of all who are interested in medieval learning. The fulfilment of this great need is only a question of time. The Most Rev. Bernardine Klumper, O. F. M., Minister General of the Order, has pledged himself and the Friars Minor to the speedy inception of this labor of love, and will entrust the task to the scholarly Fathers of Quaracchi.

We have but scant knowledge of the life of Duns Scotus. Contemporaneous sources do not speak of him, and much of what we read in the accounts of him in later centuries can hardly be credited. In the absence of definite information legends grew up around his name and supplied what a devoted following found lacking.[12]

And few writers have disclosed themselves less in their works than the Subtle Doctor. The only manifestation of self

12 The "Vita del B. Giovanni Duns Scoto, Dottore Sottile e Mariano," 1921, xiv 399 pp., by Egidio M. Giusto, O. F. M., does not pretend to be a critical biography. It is a collection of material which later writers might use to advantage for constructing something more definite.

with Scotus is the knight clad in mail *cap-a-pie* doing battle for Truth. He commands a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures and the Fathers, the philosophers and theologians of his time and former times, and is fully acquainted with the sciences of physics, astronomy, and mathematics. But his peculiar greatness lies in the keenness of his mind which enabled him to pursue, with a safe and unfaltering step, a train of thought through a maze of reasons and objections.

The system of Scotistic thought once flourished at all the centres of European learning; it has been revived in our day and promises to minister again, from the richness of its lore, to the sciences of philosophy and theology.

THE DOCTRINE OF VEN. JOHN DUNS SCOTUS (Theological Question)

CONCERNING THE CAUSALITY OF THE SACRAMENTS

RAPHAEL M. HUBER, O. M. C., S. T. D.

IN accordance with the Council of Trent[1] all theologians agree that the sacraments produce their effect, provided the recipient place no obstacle (obex) in the way, i. e., *"ex opere operato"*[2]. This primary effect of the sacrament is sanctifying and sacramental grace; the secondary effect in three of the Sacraments is the character.[3]

Sacramentum, Res, Res et Sacramentum

The Scholastics distinguish between the *sacramentum,* the *res,* and the *res et sacramentum.* By the *sacramentum* they mean the external sign, i. e., the *materia et forma* of the Sacrament, e. g., in Baptism, the pouring of the water and the words: "I baptize thee, etc."; by the *res* they mean grace; and by the *res et sacramentum,* the character.

This primary and secondary effect is produced *ex opere operato,* that is, irrespective of the dignity of the minister conferring the Sacrament or of the degree of devotion of the recipient. But just *how* do the Sacraments produce this effect *ex opere operato*—in other words, what kind of influence does the outward sign (the *sacramentum* in the sense of the Scholastics) exert on grace (the *res*) and the *res et sacramentum* (character) in producing the same? Is this influence physical and immediate, e. g., the power of steam or electricity in producing motion; or moral and mediate as, e. g., that exercised by the beggar, who through his pleadings obtains an alms; or conventional, intentional or juridical (*"imperative,"* "exigetive," as e. g., the currency bill which *"certifies* that there has been deposited in the Treasury of the United States of America one silver dollar *payable to the bearer on demand,"* or the deed of a house which denotes the title of possession on the part of the owner, or the bestowal of a certain dignity through the conferring of a seal of office?

Physical, Moral or Juridical Influence

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1 Sess. VII. Can. 6, 7, 8.
2 Cf. among others, Franzelin. "Tractatus de Sacr." Th. 7; Pesch. "De Sac." p. 46.
3 Cf. Pesch, "Prael. Dog." VII, p. 42-89.

The Thomistic School, following Cajetanus,[4] Bellarmine,[5] Suarez,[6] Gregorius de Valentia,[7] Ripalda,[8] among the earlier theologians, and Schätzler,[9] Oswald,[10] and Bucceroni,[11] among the modern theologians, teach or at least favor the physical causality of the Sacraments.[12]

Physical Causality

The Scotistic School together with such eminent theologians as Melchior Canus,[14] Vasquez,[15] Cardinal de Lugo,[16] Lessius,[17] and especially Card. Franzelin[18] propound and defend the moral causality.[19]

Moral Causality

The third manner of producing an effect, i. e., conventionally, intentionally, or juridically by means of what are termed *signa practica* as in the examples of the dollar bill, deed and seal above stated as a theory for explaining the *modus causandi sacramentorum* or the *causalitas sacramentorum,* was proposed and defended especially by Billot,[20] Lehmkuhl,[21] and Müller.[22]

Juridical Causality

There is a fourth theory concerning the efficacy of the Sacraments, viz: that the Sacraments do not really produce grace, but are only *conditiones* or *causae sine quibus non* as, e. g., light is a condition for correct writing or proper working; or Baptism is a *conditio sine qua non necessitate medii* of one's entrance into the Kingdom of God;[23] or sorrow is a requisite for the remission of sin. This theory was proposed by some of the earlier Scholastics such as Durandus[24] and Petrus Alliaco.[25] St. Bonaventure[26] is included among these by some authors.[27]

Causae sine Quibus non

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4 In 3 p. q. 62 a.1 et 4.
5 1. 2. c. 11.
6 Disp. 9. s. 2. n. 14.
7 T. 4. disp. 3. q. 3. p. 1.
8 De ente supernaturali, 1. 2. disp. 40 s. 3. n. 13.
9 "Die Wirksamkeit der Sakramente." p. 222.
10 "Die Sakramente." 1. Bd. 1 Th. ¶. 4.
11 De causal. Sac. ¶. 11.
12 Cf. Mueller—de Sac. in Gen. Opus. Manus. Innsbruck. p. 154.
13 Cf. Mueller l. c.; Hurter, Compend. theol. Dog. III p. 222. sqq.
14 Relect. de Sacram. in genere p. 4. concl. 6.
15 In 3 p. q. 62. a 4. vel d. 132. c. 5.
16 De. Sac. d. 4. s. 4.
17 In 3. q. 62. a. 4.
18 De Sac. th. 10, I.
19 Cf. Mueller l. c. p. 170 sqq.
20 De Sac. th. 7.
21 Kirchenlexikon X, 2. 1502-1504.
22 Diss. Mscr. De. Sac. N. L.
23 John III 3.
24 In 4 d. q. 4.
25 In 4, d. 1. q. 1. c. 1.
26 In 4. d. 1. q. 4.
27 Cf. Mueller l. c. p. 162-163; Hurter l. c. p. 222.

Of these four theories the last named is unanimously rejected by present day theologians on the following grounds. It virtually denies a real efficacious influence of the *sacramentum* on the *res;* it fails to distinguish sufficiently the efficacy of the sacramentals of the Old Law from the Sacraments of the New; and finally, seems to conflict with the doctrine of the Council of Trent concerning the efficacy of the Sacraments *ex opere operato,* for a *conditio sine qua non* is defined as: *"id quod requiritur, ut causa agat, quin actione sua effectum causae producat"*[28] and hence, as St. Thomas rightly concludes in arguing against this theory, the Sacrament would be only *"causa per accidens,"* as, e. g., a house which is white merely because a white man chanced to paint it.[29]

Doctrine of St. Thomas

What was the doctrine of the two great Scholastics, Thomas of Aquin and Duns Scotus, concerning the efficacy of the Sacraments? St. Thomas, as is quite often the case in other questions, is quoted by each of the defenders of the first three theories. Hurter says on this point: "Quod S. Thomam attinet, alii aliter eum interpretantur teste Lugo[30] etiam inter ipsos Thomistas."[31] Pesch says: "Utrum vero S. Thomas in posterioribus Scriptis moralem tantum an etiam physicam sacramentorum causalitatem docuerit, non convenit inter doctores."[32]

Doctrine of Scotus

The same applies to Scotus. Suarez claims the Doctor Subtilis held the Sacraments are merely *conditiones sine quibus non;* likewise Dom. Sotus,[33] Reinhold,[34] and Tanquery.[35] Vasquez,[36] although inclined to agree with Suarez, nevertheless claims that Scotus' doctrine is to be distinguished from that of Durandus,[37] Occam, and Gabriel Biel. Sasse is of the opinion that Scotus held the moral causality,[38] whereas Hurter leaves the question open.[39] So

28 Cf. Reinstadler, "Elementa Phil. Scholast." p. 346.
29 "Sed hoc non videtur sufficere ad solvende dicta sanctorum. Causa enim sine qua non, si nihil omnino faciat ad inducendum effectum vel disponendo vel meliorando quantum ad rationem causandi, nihil habebit supra causas per accidens; sicut album est causa domus, si aedificator sit albus." (In 4 d. l. q. 1 a. 4.) cf. Summa III q. 62 a. 1. and 6.
30 Disp. 4. s. 5. n. 98 ss.
31 L. c. 227.
32 L. c. p. 66.
33 In 4 dist. 1. q. 3. a 1.
34 L. c.
35 Syn. Theol. Dogm. II 217.
36 In III Sent. S. Thom. disp. 131 c. 1.
37 Cf. Pesch. l. s. 58, 2.
38 De Sac. I. p. 79.
39 Theol. Dogm. Comp. III, p. 221. "Ad eam opinionem (sci. moralem) accedere videtur."

does Pesch.[40] All agree that Scotus rejected the physical causality.

Purpose of Treatise

The purpose of the present essay is: First, to show that Scotus taught a real *efficacia sacramentorum;* secondly, to refute the assertion of those who claim that Scotus taught the Sacraments are merely *"conditiones sine quibus non;"* and thirdly, to propose a theory which to us seems the most probable and harmonious with his own words as contained not in the one or other passage but in all of his authentic works taken as a whole.

It must not seem superficial to prove that Scotus was in agreement with the Church, especially with the later teaching of the Council of Trent, and taught a real *causalitas sacramentorum;* for although this is not the main purpose of our work, it is too closely connected with it to be omitted. This infallible teaching of Mother Church must be our guide in examining every opinion that attempts to explain the *modus causandi sacramentorum.* If the theory is in harmony with the teaching of the Church, it can be considered at least probable, provided, of course, it is not encumbered by other difficulties. If, on the other hand, it is opposed to her teaching, it must *a priori* be rejected as unsound and unsafe. Hence, if Scotus expounded a theory which cannot be considered consistent with the Canons of the Church, as e. g., the opinion that the sacraments produce grace merely as *conditiones sine quibus non,* then his doctrine is untenable; if on the other hand, he taught another theory —if he saw in the sacraments more than mere conditions, something that will allow us to conclule a real *causalitas,* we can admit his opinion at least as probable, particularly since the Church has not defined anything concerning the *modus causandi* of the sacraments.

PART ONE

Council of Trent. *Obex*

What is the Catholic doctrine concerning the *causalitas sacramentorum?* The Council of Trent has spoken clearly on this point in three of its canons. In Canon 6, Sess. VII we read: *"Si quis dixerit, Sacramenta N. L. non continere gratiam, quam significant, aut gratiam ipsam non ponentibus obicem non conferri. . . . . .A. S."*

40 L. c. p. 58.

Concerning the doctrine expressed in this Canon, Scotus writes: "Ultimum autem de potentia signi vel Sacramenti est quod semper habeat secum suum signatum, quantum est ex parte sui; sic autem est in proposito. Semper enim Deus assistet suo signato, ut veraciter et efficaciter insit, quod demonstrat, nisi sit impedimentum ex parte suscipientis, et ipso sublato statim inest signatum."[41] Scotus therefore teaches as long as no impediment (obex) is placed by the recipient of the Sacraments they will invariably produce their effect.

Canon 7 of the Council (l. c.) reads thus: "Si quis dixerit, non dari gratiam per hujusmodi Sacramenta semper, et omnibus, quantum est ex parte Dei, estiamsi rite ea suscipiant, sed aliquando, et aliquibus, A. S." Scotus says the same when he teaches:[42] "Sacramentum est signum signatum repræsentans et semper habens secum suum signatum quantum ex se." He says the same more clearly in these words: "Est ergo signum verum habens semper, quantum est ex parte sui, suum signatum et gratiam quam significat;" and again: "Signum enim istud ita est verum et efficax, licet ad placitum, quod semper habet secum quod significat; et non quod quandoque non inest, sed semper quod inest quantum est in se."[43] The doctrine of the Council could not be stated more plainly.

Semper et Omnibus

Canon 8 finally reads thus: "Si quis dixerit, per ipsa N. L. sacramenta ex opere operato non conferri gratiam, A. S." That Scotus is in conformity with the Church likewise on this point is clear from the distinction he makes between the Sacraments of the New Law and the ceremonials of the Old Law. "Ceremonialia illa, quae non sunt Sacramenta, ut immolare victimas pacificas, orare et jejunare, et hujusmodi nec ex pactione divina nec etiam ex virtute propria conferebant gratiam; sicut nec ceremonialia nostra, ut abstinere a carnibus diebus veneris, conferunt gratiam virtute propria *operis operati;*[44] and again: "Oblationes etiam, quae erant actus latriae, promittebant gratiam et signabant Christum, qui erat vera hostia immolanda Deo Patri pro genere humano; talia enim non conferebant gratiam virtute propria, scilicet *operis operati,* sed virtute motus interioris."[45]

Ex Opere Operato

41 In. Lib. IV d. I. q. IV. Sc. V.
42 In D. I. Q. V.
43 L. c.
44 D. I. q. IV. Sc. IV.
45 D. I. q. IV. Sc. III.

We will add two other texts in which this "vera causalitas" is taught. In d. II. q. I, Scotus teaches: "Omne Sacramentum est causa efficiens, et demonstrativum pro praesenti" (i. e., in contradistinction to the signum rememorativum of the past and prognosticum of the future). Finally in D. I. q. II, he says: "Item illa sensibilia plura vel unum in quo instituitur Sacramentum, vel signuum, vel habet convenientiam naturalem ad significandum ipsum signatum, cujusmodi sunt nomina hebræa, imposita ab Adam, qui imposuit rebus secundum convenientiam earum naturales ad res, ut creditur; vel secundum convenientiam ad placitum, ut haec vox 'homo' significat naturam humanam ad placitum, nam naturaliter non plus rem unam quam aliam significat; et secundum hoc dico quod Deus sacramentum instituit ut esset signum ex instituente ad placitum, *verum et efficax et demonstrativum* in uno sensibili et visibili, vel audibili, vel in pluribus habentibus similitudinem naturalem ad signatum, ut ablutio exterior, quae est sacramentum Baptismi, et fit in aqua et verbis, significat ablutionem animae interiorem. Similiter in Eucharistia sensibilis panis exterior, qui naturaliter nutrit, significat animae nutritionem, et refectionem interiorem: vel in uno sensibili non habente similitudinem naturalem ad signatum, ut patet in Matrimonio, ubi tantum sunt verba quae signant interiorem consensum animorum tantum ad placitum. Congruum ergo erat Deum instituere aliquod signum sensibile, *significans ex institutione veraciter et demonstrative* gratiam invisibilem in uno sensibili vel pluribus habente vel habentibus convenientiam naturalem, vel ad placitum cum ipso signato, et haec est descriptio et definitio Sacramenti data de re, quam significat hoc nomen Sacramentum."[46]

Sacraments not mere Receptacles of Grace

Scotus not only teaches a marked difference between the ceremonies of the Old Law and the Sacraments of the New in virtue of the manner in which they produce their effect, the former *ex opere operantis,* the latter *ex opere operato,* but likewise denies that the Sacraments are mere receptacles of grace like, e. g., a pail containing water. In D. I. q. IV, n. 8., Scotus says: "Deus pepigit assistere Sacramentis ut conferrent quod signant et non habent tantum rationem receptivi respectu gratiae;" and again in n. 9: "Ergo ille qui inducit dispositionem non habentem rationem receptivi respectu

46 D. I. q. II. Sc. I.

formae, dicatur habere efficaciam respectu formae, sicut tu (St. Thomas of Aquin) ponis de aqua, quod causat gratiam in anima, multo magis Sacramentum et ablutio instrumentalis, quae est dispositio ulterior non in *rationem receptivi,* diceretur aliquo modo *causare gratiam,* et ita secundum hanc viam facilius potest sustineri *Sacramenta dare gratiam,* quam secundum priorem."

Vera Causalitas

Scotus not only holds that the Sacraments are not the mere receptacles of grace (the doctrine of William of Auxerre—Gulielmus Antisiodorensis) but furthermore teaches that they possess a real *active* efficacy in the production of their effect: "Licet enim ablutio sit passio respectu corporis, non tamen respectu gratiae, sed est quaedam *dispositio activa* respectu ejus ex pactione divina, sicut ipsi (Thomists) ponunt de ornatu; ergo habet rationem *efficientis et activi* respectu gratiae."[47] The *ornatus* of which Scotus here speaks is an *effectus praevius* to grace (concerning which we shall speak in the third part) held by the older Thomists, and corresponds to the character in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders.[48] Scotus in the last passage quoted is arguing against the Thomists ("sicut ipsi ponunt de ornatu"). At the same time, however, he admits with them a real efficacy on the part of the *materia* and *forma* in the production of grace, they through a *terminus medius,* Scotus *immediate,* i. e., without a *terminus medius.* Hence in union with them he draws the same conclusion: "Ergo habet rationem efficientis et activi respectu gratiae." The Thomists however admit a real efficacy of the sacraments, a *causalitas physica.*[49] Hence, unless violence be used to misconstrue his very words and line of argument it must be admitted that Scotus does likewise, for he says: "sicut ipsi ponunt de ornatu" (l. c.).

Where Scotus argues against the *effectus praevius* as proposed by St. Thomas[50] in his Commentary on the Sentences of Peter of Lombardy and the earlier Thomists (an opinion no longer held by theologians)[51] he speaks of a dispositio activa quae reducitur ad causam efficientem," and of a "violenta activitas

47 D. I. q. IV.
48 Cf. Pesch. l. c. p. 65.
49 Cf. Pesch. l. c. p. 64.
50 In. 4. D. I. q. 1. a. 4.
51 Cf. Pesch. l. c. p. 65. Even St. Thomas no longer mentions this "effectus praevius" in his later work, the Summa; for which reason many are of the opinion that the Angelic Doctor tacendo retracted it. Cf. III q. 62. a. 1.

(quae) agit ad inductionem illius substantiae." "Alteratio praecedens inductionem formae substantialis necessario non per se terminatur ad substantiam, ut ad per se terminum intrinsecum, sed ad qualitatem in ea, et tamen dicitur aliquo modo causa substantiae, non formalis. Patet quia tunc substantia esset per se qualitas; nec finalis quia praecedit eam; nec materialis, quia quando substantia inducitur, tunc cessat alteratio; ergo ut *dispositio activa reducitur ad causam efficientem;* nec ista dispositio activa respectu formae substantialis causat aliquam dispositionem aliam a se respectu illius substantiae, sed *per violentam illam activitatem,* quam habet, *agit ad inductionem illius substantiae.* Similiter in proposito. Sacramenta non causant in anima vel in se aliquam dispositionem ad aliquem terminum respectu gratiae praeter seipsa."[52] Surely the words *"dispositio activa quae reducitur ad causam efficientem"* and *"violenta activitas"* must be construed as signifying a real efficacy on the part of the *materia* and *forma* in the production of grace in distinction from a mere passive reception or a *conditio sine qua non* (of which we shall say more in the second part).

Ceremonies and Sacraments

Our fourth argument is taken from the texts, quoted above, in which Scotus shows that the difference between the Ceremonies of the Old Law and the Sacraments of the New consists in the fact that in the former *"propter bonum motum interiorem datur gratia* (ex opere operantis),[53] while in the latter the effect is produced *"ex virtute propria"* and *"ex opere operato."*[54]

These four arguments sustained by quotations from the Doctor Subtilis prove conclusively that Scotus taught a *vera causalitas sacramentorum,* and that there is no opposition between his doctrine and that of the Council of Trent.

Negative Argument

After these several proofs does it not seem necessary *a priori* to exclude from the works of Scotus any doctrine that stands in open and pronounced contradiction to his clear teaching of the true "efficacia Sacramentorum?" Or shall we say that such a sharp mind as Scotus of whom Hurter says: *"Negari nequit Scotum sagacissimi fuisse ingenii, quod omnes fatentur, et admodum critici,"*[55]

52 L. IV d. 1. q. IV Sc. IV.
53 D. I. q. IV. Sch. IV.
54 L. c.
55 Nomenclator, IV, 367.

could not see that a doctrine like that of the Sacraments being merely "conditiones sine quibus non" stands in direct opposition to his own teaching of a vera efficacia? If other men, e. g., Durandus, understood this and consequently denied a vera causalitas how much more easily would not Scotus have seen the incompatibility of these two doctrines? Durandus, e. g., says: "In Sacramentis non est aliqua virtus causativa gratiae, characteris vel cujuscunque dispositionis seu ornatus, sed (in opposition to this vera causalitas) sunt causae sine quibus non confertur gratia."[56] St. Bonaventure after referring to this opinion writes: "Est et aliorum magnorum magistrorum circa hoc opinio dicentium, quod in Sacramentis non sit causalitas, nec virtus aliqua effectiva seu dispositiva ad gratiam."[57] A similar doctrine was taught by Henry of Ghent (Henricus Gandavensis),[58] William of Auxerre,[59] and Peter of Ailly[60] How far Scotus is removed from drawing such conclusions is evident from the above named four points. This negative argument serves as an apt connecting link between the first and the second part of our treatise. In this latter we shall investigate from a positive point of view whether Scotus taught, as some theologians hold,[61] the theory that the sacraments are "causae sine quibus non."

PART TWO

DID SCOTUS TEACH THAT THE SACRAMENTS ARE "CAUSAE SINE QUIBUS NON?"

Exposition by St. Thomas

In order to get a clear idea of this theory let us hear St. Thomas expound it. "Omnes coguntur," says the Angelic Doctor, "ponere Sacramenta Novae Legis aliquo modo causas gratiae esse propter auctoritates quae hoc expresse dicunt. Sed diversi diversimodo eas causas ponunt. Quidam enim dicunt quod non sunt causae aliquod facientes in anima, sed causae sine quibus non, quia increata virtus, quae sola effectus ad gratiam pertinentes in anima facit, Sacramentis assistit per quandam Dei ordinationem et quasi pactionem. Sic enim ordinavit et quasi

56 In. IV. Sent. d. I., q. IV.
57 In IV Sent. D. I. q. IV. St. Thomas commenting on this opinoni says: "Iste modus non transcendit rationem signi." III q. 62. a. 1.
58 Quat. Lib. IV q. 37.
59 Summa, L. 4. tr. 3.
60 In 4. D. I. q. I. cf. Mueller, l. c. p. 164.
61 Cf. above p.

pepigit Deus, ut, qui Sacramenta accipiunt, simul ab eo gratiam accipiant, non quasi Sacramenta faciant aliquid ad hoc. Et est simile de illo, qui accipit denarium plumbium, facta tali ordinatione, ut qui habuerit unum de talis denariis, habeat centum libras a rege, qui quidem denarius non dat illas centum libras, sed solus rex accipienti ipsum."[62] We shall now examine this definition and exposition of St Thomas in detail, and see how far Scotus agrees with, or rather differs, from it.

Refutations by Scotus

The first element of this theory is that the Sacraments *"non sunt causae quasi aliquid facientes in anima;"* or put differently, the materia and forma have in themselves no influence in the production of grace. What does Scotus say on this point? In D. I. q. IV, n. 8. he writes: "Habet—Sacramentum quandam *actionem naturalem,* ut aqua cum verbis in Sacramento Baptismi abluere habet corpus, quae dici potest *actio instrumentalis respectu gratiae, quia significat* ablutionem animae interiorem per gratiam quae est ibi actio principalis, ut sic Sacramentum proprie dicatur *dispositio activa naturalis* respectu gratiae, *reducta ad genus causae efficientis.*" Accordingly, Scotus does not teach as the defenders of the theory "causae sine quibus non" "quod non sunt causae quasi aliquid facientes ad hoc," but on the contrary: 1) "habet Sacramentum quandam actionem naturalem," i. e., there is a natural and active relationship between the Sacrament and the effect. 2) This *"naturalis actio"* "potest dici actio instrumentalis." A *"conditio sine qua non"* however is not an active instrument in the production of an effect but merely a passive requirement for the result to be obtained. "Conditio est id," says Donat,[63] "quod necessarium est, ut causa effectum producat, *sed ipsum non influit;* ut remotio impedimentorum, applicatio causae." If the conditio is so necessary that it cannot be supplied by anything else, it is called a "conditio sine qua non."[64] Hence, since Scotus terms the influence of the sacramentum on grace an *"actio instrumentalis"* he certainly implies more than a mere "conditio sine qua non." 3) This *actio naturalis* is called *instrumentalis quia significat* ablutionem animae interiorem per gratiam quae est ibi actio principalis," i. e., *"significando causat,"* as we shall see later. 4) This "na-

62 In. IV, d. 1. q. 1. a. 4. cf. Summa III, q. 62. a. 1.
63 Met. Gen. Ed. II p. 129.
64 Cf. Donat. l. c.

turalis actio instrumentalis quae significando causat" is the reason why the Sacrament may be properly called a *"dispositio activa respectu gratiae."* Where there is an "activa dispositio" however, a mere passive cooperation in the production of grace is necessarily excluded. A "conditio sine qua non" is defined as "id, quod requiritur (passive cooperation) ut causa agat, *quin actione sua* effectum causae producat."[65] But Scotus says the Sacraments do produce their effect in so far as they are an *activa dispositio* towards that end. This "dispositio activa" finally 5) is not merely *aptitudinalis* but *exigetiva,* that is to say, after the matter and the form of the Sacrament have validly been placed, the soul is not only disposed to receive grace —as e. g., a cellar after it has been dug is a fit place for the storing of vegetables—but actually *demands* grace, which is not true of the cellar in regard to the vegetables. This exigency (of which more will be said in the third part) Scotus says can aptly be called a sort of "causa efficiens," "dispositio exigetiva reducta ad genus causae efficientis."

This one passage alone contains five elements incompatible with the "causae sine quibus non" theory. We shall now examine each of these elements in detail.

1) Scotus says "habet Sacramentum *actionem naturalem.*" Therefore the signum externum has something to do with the production of grace, for in truth an *actio* includes in its very nature an interior activity in contradistinction to a *mera potentia,* for *actio* is defined as "potentia reducta ad actum," or as Limburg puts it: "actio est actuale virtutis efficiendi exercitium."[66] By this expression however, Scotus does not mean to infer that the "signum externum" alone and on its own merits is capable of producing grace —nothing is more foreign to his mind. "Sacramenta sunt *signa effectiva* et vera demonstrativa in signata, non quia dant gratiam (i. e., by themselves) vel quia ab iis sit gratia, sed a Deo per ipsa." A misunderstanding of this and similar passages may have induced certain authors to conclude that Scotus taught the theory "causae sine quibus non." However unjustly, for Scotus wishes here only to proclaim the Catholic doctrine, namely, that the Sacraments work ex opere operato, and not ex opere operantis. He wishes to say that the Sacraments are

Actio Naturalis

65 Reinstadler, l. c. 346.
66 Metaphys. Lib. V. 310. 67. De Sac. Caus. p. 4.

instruments which God as the "causa principalis" uses to produce grace.

2) This he explicitly declares in the second element, when he says that this *actio naturalis Sacramenti* is an *actio instrumentalis.* A "causa sine qua non" however, does not possess a positive and active cooperation in the production of an effect, for as Buccer-oni says: "conditio in se nullam habet moralem dignitatem, sed est disposito *mera negativa,* sacramentalis gratiae obicem removens."[67]

Actio Instrumentalis

At this juncture we are confronted with a difficulty which it seems best to answer now. After having repeated the doctrine of St. Thomas concerning a "causa instrumentalis" Scotus[68] denies that an "actio instrumentalis" is an "actio propria." St. Thomas admits a two-fold "causa instrumentalis," that of the agent, and that of the instrument proper, e. g., a carpenter using a saw to cut wood. "Instrumentum—scindendo enim facit lectum."[69] Scotus admits the first function of a causa instrumentalis, that is, that of the causa principalis, but denies the second, e. g., of the instrument proper. "Falsa est ergo major quod omne agens instrumentale habet actionem propriam per aliud sibi proprium praeter illam quae attribuitur agenti principali."[70] From this it would seem to follow that the Sacraments have no activity of their own in producing grace, but are to be considered merely as dead instruments devoid of any "actio instrumentalis" and hence, that the Sacraments after all are only "conditiones sine quibus non." Before solving the objection, we would recall to mind all that has been said in the first part of our treatise—in which Scotus so lucidly proposes and ardently defends the theory that the Sacraments are "verae causae gratiae" and do not operate "ad modum receptivi." However, we believe the objection can be solved in a positive manner. Scotus in this passage does not deny any and every activity on the part of the instrument (here the signa externa sacramentorum) but only a *physical* influence as held by the Thomists. That he did not exclude a juridical or *"dispositiva* actio instrumentalis quae significando causat" will be proven in the third

Difficulty from St. Thomas

68 D. I. q. 1. Sch. 1.
69 3. p. q. 62. art. 1.
70 D. I. q. 1. Sch. II. m. 8.

part of the treatise.[71] In our opinion this is the only way in which Scotus can consistently be interpreted.

But to return to our argument. 3) Scotus says "quia significat (i. e., Sacramentum) ablutionem interiorem per gratiam quae est ibi actio principalis," i. e., this active cooperation on the part of the signum externum produces grace *in so far as it signifies* the same; in other words "significando causant," after the fashion of juridical actions (e. g., a deed conferring the title of ownership) and "signorum practicorum." As this question will be treated more fully in the third part it need not be explained extensively here.

Significando Causant

However, we do wish to answer another objection that may be made. It might seem that a "conditio" has the same efficacy as that which we have just described, namely, a *"causa quae significando causat,"* for to use the example of St. Thomas quoted above, should a subject receive a lead or bronze coin from his king with the understanding and promise that when he presents it to the proper authority, let us say at the Treasury Department, he should receive in return one hundred dollars, it appears that this bronze coin bears the same relationship to the hundred dollars as the sacraments to grace. This difficulty is likewise only a sophism, for the productive cause of the hundred dollars is not the coin but only the will of the king, as is evident.[72] According to Scotus, however, besides the will of God, and the "significatio gratiae" there is also to be distinguished and added a real activity on the part of the signum, not physical as has just been said, but an activity which he calls a *significatio efficax*, founded on the *"actio naturalis et instrumentalis sacramentorum"* a *"dispositio necessitans ad gratiam, reducta ad genus causae efficientis"* (l. c.). And thus Scotus' theory differs from that illustrated by St. Thomas in the example of the bronze coin and money, according to which the Sacraments would be merely *"conditiones sine quibus non."*

4) Scotus tells us that the Sacraments are "a dispositio activa respectu gratiae." What does he mean by the term "dispositio?" a) This *dispositio* is not a mere *causa materia-*

71 Cf. D. I. q. 4. Sch. 4. n. 8.

72 "Qui quidem denarius," says St. Thomas, "non dat illas centas libras, sed solus rex accipienti ipsum," l. c.

Dispositio Activa

lis (e. g., the clay out of which the vase is made) for Scotus denies this explicitly.[73] b) This *dispositio* is by no means a *"mera conditio"* for a conditio is defined as "id sine quo causa non influeret, ipsa autem non influit."[74] According to Scotus, however, the Sacraments do cooperate in the production of grace as proven above. c) The Sacraments according to Scotus are not a "mera dispositio *aptitudinalis*" but rather an *"activa* dispositio quae reducitur ad causam efficientem;"[75] a "dispositio necessitans ad gratiam;"[76] a "dispositio" quae "non habet rationem tantum receptivi respectu gratiae;"[77] a "dispositio quae habet rationem efficientis et activi respectu gratiae."[78] To illustrate more clearly what he means by these last named terms, Scotus uses the example of human generation and its influence on God in the creation and infusion of man's immortal soul.[79] When the foetus is conceived there exists not only a mere disposition for the reception of the soul but also a real exigency for its infusion. By the word dispositio, therefore Scotus means an exigency for grace founded on a promise by Almighty God. By virtue of this promise and the intrinsic significance of each sacrament (sensu scholastico) there exists whenever the valid materia and forma are united with the intention of the minister of the sacrament an exigency for the infusion of sanctifying grace; the conferring of the respective sacramental grace follows, and also the impression of the character conferred in certain sacraments. This exigency is termed by Scotus a "dispositio necessitans ad gratiam." It is therefore to be distinguished from the mere condition, for a condition bears to an effect a relation which is purely *external* and *passive* without *positively* and *actively* cooperating in the production of the effect. The effect is produced *on the occasion of,* not *by virtue of,* the condition.

Objection by Cajetan

We are now prepared to meet the objection of Cajetan[80] who contends that according to the doctrine of Scotus the sacraments may indeed be styled "causae" in name, but that in reality they are not. For if the sacrament in as far as it is a "dispositio necessitans ad gratiam" cannot be styled a true cause of grace, neither can a man be called the father of his child since Philosophy teaches

73 Cf. D. I. q. 5 Sch. 4. Cf. above p.
74 Mueller "De Sac." p. 166.
75 D. I. q. 4. Sch. 4. n. 9.
76 D. I. q. 4. Sch. 4. n. 8.
77 Ib.
78 Ib.
79 D. I. q. 1. Sch. 4. n. 19.
80 III. q. 62, Art. 1.

he is not a "causa efficiens" (scricto sensu) of the principal part of his child, namely the soul, but only the one who induces such a "dispositio" (exigency) in the foetus which, as it were, necessitates God to infuse a living soul.[81]

Objection of Vasquez

Vasquez[82] objects to this "dispositio" of Scotus on the ground that in three of the sacraments, i. e., Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders, this effect or character is validly produced and indelibly impressed irrespective of the disposition of the recipient. Vasquez here seems to be of the opinion that according to Scotus the impression of the character depends on the good or bad *subjective* disposition of the recipient, whereas in reality there is no question of such disposition at all. Scotus speaks of an *objective,* not subjective, disposition which lies not in the *recipient* but in the *reception* of the Sacrament, and by virtue of which objective disposition the character is always imprinted, even though, on account of an obex, grace be not immediately infused. "Quodomodo" asks Scotus, "se habet iste character impressus animae ad gratiam, quae est in anima? Utrum sit idem vel allud ab eo? Respondeo quod est alia a gratia et virtutibus, quia character imprimitur quandoque in suscipiente Sacramenti, quando gratia et virtutes non infundantur. Patet de ficte suscipiente Baptismum qui recipit characterem, et non gratiam, neque virtutes sicut supra dictum est.[83]

Finally, attention must be drawn to the fact that it is not true what Cajetan presupposes, namely that this Scotistic "dispositio" is an effect of the Sacrament. This dispositio is rather the reception of the Sacrament proper[84] and necessitates the infusion of grace.

Causa Efficiens

e) The fifth element by which the doctrine of Scotus differs from the theory of the "causae sine quibus non" is this. Scotus calls the reception of the Sacrament a *"dispositio activa* (not "subjectiva") *reducta ad genus causae efficientis."* He does not call this activa dispositio a *"causa efficiens"* simpliciter, in the sense in which this term is generally applied, i. e., a causa physica. Scotus is so clear on the rejection of a causa physica in the production of grace that there can be no doubt about his teaching on this

81 L. c.
82 In III S. Th. disp. 132 c. 1.
83 D. IV. q. V.; D. VI. q. VIII. Sch. 1.
84 Cf. Third Part.

point. Scotus takes this "causa efficiens" in a moral or juridical sense after the fashion of human generation as explained above. Now it is evident that a "conditio" which is merely passive in the production of an effect, because it depends entirely on the activity of a "causa principalis," can never be identified with this kind of juridical efficiency. For which reason Scotus says: "Istud enim signum ita est verum et efficax, licet ad placitum, quod semper habet secum quod signat, et non quod quandoque non inest, sed semper quod inest quantum est ex se; et ideo signanter dicitur in ejus definitione, quod præter specimen, quam ingerit sensibus' hoc signum *'aliquid aliud facit quantum est ex se* in cognitionem venire' et est efficax signum ad actionem, *quia quæ signa non sunt activa,* non sunt Sacramenta."[85] In other words, *"mera* conditio" cannot be styled an *active* principle which in the production of an effect communicates something of itself (quantum est ex se). For that reason, unless violence be brought to bear on Scotus, he cannot consistently be accused of teaching that the Sacraments are only "conditiones sine quibus non." Scotus furthermore, says in the same passage: "Unde quantum est ex se, est signum verum et non æquivocum respectu gratiæ, si sit dispositio vel non indispositio in suscipiente Sacramentum vel istud signum. Nec est etiam signum rememorativum, vel prognosticum quia illa sunt quantum est ex se, sine illo quod significant, signatum utriusque est non ens, sed est signum demonstrativum."[86] He here distinguishes between the signum practicum or demonstrativum on the one hand, and the signum rememorativum (past) and prognosticum (future) on the other hand. These two classes of signs differ because the former (practica et demonstrativa) effect what they signify, whereas the latter (rememorativa et prognostica) merely signify without effecting.

From these texts and the preceding passages and considerations we feel confident in concluding that Scotus never taught the theory that the Sacramens are "conditiones or causae sine quibus non;" for in truth a conditio can never be called a "causa *efficax, efficiens,* and *activa"* which produces its effect "ex opere operato" and "ex virtute propria quantum est ex se,"

85 D. I. q. II. Sch. I. N. 4.
86 Ib.

for a "conditio est id sine quo causa non influerit, ipsa autem non influit."[87]

2. The second distinguishing mark of the theory "conditiones sine quibus non" is according to the above quoted passage of St. Thomas[88] this: "Sic enim ordinavit et quasi pepigit Deus, ut qui sacramenta accipiunt simul ab eo gratiam recipiant, *non quasi sacramenta aliquid faciant* ad hoc."[89] Sasse confirms this idea of a *conditio* when he says: "Quod est solum conditio sine qua non, id licet sit necessarium ad productionem effectus non tamen in se continet virtutem causantem effectus, sed solum cum altero, in quo est propria ratio causalitatis, connexum esse debet, quia secus haec causalitas non transiret in actum."[90]

Conditio sine Qua non

How remote this theory is from that of Scotus is clear from the aforesaid. To clarify matters let us make use of the example given by Scotus himself: "Minor patet per exemplum" — his minor was — "Licet enim ablutio sit passio respectu corporis, non tamen respectu gratiae, sed est *quaedam dispositio activa respectu ejus*"—"Per exemplum sic," Scotus continues — "Meritum conceditur" habere respectum efficaciae alicujus respectu praemii, quia per meritum acquiritur praemium et tamen nec instrumentaliter, nec principaliter causat aliquam dispositionem a se (distinctam) respectu praemii (Scotus is here arguing against the "effectus praevius" of St. Thomas—concerning which more will be said in the third part—) verius enim conceditur quod merita fecerunt ipsum beatum, quam quod ipse fecit se beatum; ergo si ille qui inducit dispositionem non habentem rationem receptivi respectu formae, dicatur habere efficaciam respectu formae, sicut tu ponis de aqua quod causat gratiam in anima, multo magis Sacramentum et ablutio instrumentalis, quae est dispositio ulterior non in ratione receptivi, diceretur aliquo modo *causare gratiam,* et ita secundum hanc viam facilius potest sustinere *Sacramenta dare gratiam* quam secundum priorem viam" (i. e., according to the viewpoint of St. Thomas).[91]

Exmaple of Scotus

We recognize that the above quoted words of St. Thomas "non quasi aliquid facientes ad hoc" do not apply to merit as regards the reward; for while excluding a physical influence

87 Mueller l. c.
88 p.
89 In. IV. d. I. q. I a. 4.
90 De. Sac. I. p. 29.
91 D. I. q. IV. Sch. 4.

on the reward, we do not for that reason exclude all other influence. Let us hear St. Thomas himself on this point: "*Meritum est causa praemii,* non quidem per modum finalis causae, sic enim magis praemium est causa meriti, *sed magis secundum reductionem ad causam efficientem;* in quantum meritum facit dignum praemio et per hoc ad praemium disponit."[92] In truth if we transfer these words to the theory of Scotus concerning the "causalitas Sacramentorum" we have this result: "Sacramentum est causa gratiae" in the same sense in which St. Thomas says: "Meritum est causa praemii," or to use Scotus' own words: "Meritum conceditur habere respectum efficaciae alicujus praemii quia per meritum acquiritur praemium."

Objection

An objection could be brought against this example of merit and reward on the ground that Scotus uses it only to exclude the "effectus praevius" of St. Thomas, but not to explain his theory of the "causalitas Sacramentorum." To this objection we answer that Scotus used it to prove both since he had both in mind. His intention was to prove his minor which was: "Ablutio respectu gratiae" is a "dispositio activa." Neither can it be said that merit is a "dispositio" rather than the "causa efficiens" of the reward, the "causa efficiens" being the wage earner. For we must conceive this example as Scotus conceived it. Scotus does not consider the meritum merely as a right to a reward (as e. g., the res et sacramentum and ornatus animae, according to St. Thomas, create an exigency for grace), but considers the meritum itself a kind of "causa efficiens." "Verius enim conceditur quod merita fecerunt ipsum beatum quam quod ipse se fecit beatum."[93] In like manner do the Sacraments produce grace. They are a kind of causa efficiens; a "kind" because the sacraments do not produce their effect *physically* but rather morally or juridically. ("Sed magis secundum reductionem ad causam efficientem.") From which consideration it likewise follows that Scotus did not teach the "causae sine quibus non" theory.

3. The third mark of this last named theory is illustrated by St. Thomas in the example of the king who gives a bronze coin to a servant with the simultaneous order to the Treasury

92 De. Ver. q. 29 Art. VI.
93 L. c.

Example of St. Thomas

Department that at the presentation of the coin the servant be given one hundred pounds. In all our study of Scotus we have never come across this example to illustrate his theory, although Scotus uses examples quite frequently, particularly when they serve to elucidate his ideas. On the other hand the defenders and exponents of the theory "sine quibus non" continuously and consistently use this example, e. g., Durandus;[94] St. Bonaventure, who at least favored, if he did not hold, it;[95] and St. Thomas where he refers to this opinion.[96]

The expression "sine quibus non" is found only once in Scotus and then only in an objection. The passage reads thus: "Ad primam quaestionem dicitur quod Sacramenta N. L. aliquam per se habent efficaciam respectu gratiae quia aliter non essent causae gratiae, nisi causae sine quibus non, hoc est inconveniens."[97] Does Scotus perhaps defend here the theory "sine quibus non" against the objection of St. Thomas: "hoc est inconveniens," as he denied the "causa physica Sacramentorum" and "effectus praevius;" or does he admit the conclusion drawn, namely, that the Sacraments are "causae sine quibus non?" By no means! In his answer to this objection he propounds his own theory that is the "dispositio activa quae reducitur ad genus causae efficientis"[98] which is incompatible with the theory "sine quibus non," as we have seen above. Were Scotus of the opinion that the Sacraments are merely "causae sine quibus non" he surely would have said so especially in connection with this objection where he disagrees with St. Thomas, just as he expressed his opinion when he rejected the effectus praevius of St. Thomas and the causalitas physica[99] of the Thomists, and then proposed his own theory of the "dispositio activa immediata."

The fourth mark of the theory "sine quibus non" as treated by St. Thomas is: "Sic enim ordinavit et quasi pepigit Deus ut, qui Sacramenta recipiunt, simul ab eo gratiam recipiant;[100]

Causa Principalis

We indeed find this "pactio divina" in Scotus, but in an entirely different sense than that used by the defenders of the theory "sine quibus non." According to these this "pactio divina" is the sole cause of the

94 In. IV. d. 1. q. 4.
95 In. L. IV. d. 1. q. 4.
96 In. L. IV. d. 1. q. 4.
97 D. I. q. 4. Sch. I. n. 4.
98 Cf. Third Part.
99 Cf. Sch. II. l. c.
100 In. IV. d. 1. q. 1. a. 4.

Sacramental grace; with Scotus it is indeed the "causa principalis," but not the sole cause, for the sacrament itself, i. e., the "signam externum" is an "actio instrumentalis," namely, a "dispositio activa reducta ad genus causae efficientis" as we have seen.

Herewith we believe to have proven sufficiently the second part of our treatise, namely, that Scotus did not teach the theory that the Sacraments are "causae sine quibus non" of grace, but on the contrary placed, in opposition to it, his own theory, which we have partly seen and which we shall now explain more in detail.

PART THREE

THE THEORY OF SCOTUS

In this last part of our treatise we shall expound the theory of Scotus concerning the "modus causandi sacramentorum" as we believe him to have taught it. His theory can be expressed in these words:

Thesis

"Sacramenta N. L. co videntur esse causae gratiae quod tamquam signa practica nomine Dei posita effectum gratiae immediate attingunt, quatenus ipsa susceptio Sacramentorum est dispositio juridice exigens gratiam."

We shall now endeavor to prove our thesis phrase by phrase by quoting or referring to Scotus' own words.

Sacramenta sunt Causae Gratiae

1. *"Sacramenta sunt causae gratiae."* This was proven in the first part and hence needs no further comment. We merely refer to Scotus' L. IV, q. 2. Sch. I, n. 5; q. 5. Sch. III n. 10; q. 4. Sch. 4, and to his examples of meritum and the generatio humana as explained above.

Signa Practica

2. The Sacraments are the causes of grace in as far as they are *"signa practica."* By a signum "practicum," in opposition to a signum demonstrativum, is meant any external sign which not only signifies or demonstrates its signatum or effect, but also produces it. Smoke, e. g., is a signum demonstrativum of fire (the smoke does not produce the fire, but is only a sign of it); whereas an automobile or locomotive is not only a sign of high motive speed, but likewise the means by which high speed is obtained. Thus the ablution of the head with water not only signifies spiritual purification, but likewise washes away the

taint of original sin from the soul. In this regard Scotus writes: "Dico quod Deus sacramentum instituit, ut esset *signum* ex instituente ad placitum *verum, et efficax et demonstrativum.*"[101] A sign, however, which has not in itself the power of producing an effect (signatum) can never be called *"efficax."* For this reason Scotus mentions both elements of the "signum practicum," namely, that it be "demonstrativum" and "efficax." "Sacramentum," he says in another place, "est signum verum *habens secum* semper quantum est ex se suum signatum, ut gratiam quam significat."[102] The expression "habens secum suum signatum" signifies to be the cause of the signatum, in contradistinction to being a mere "signum demonstrativum." Scotus admits only one case in which the "signum demonstrativum et efficax" does not effect its signatum, and that is when an obstacle (obex) is placed between the signum and the signatum. He points out plainly, however, that in this case the reason lies not in the signum itself but in the recipient of the sacrament. "Aliquando tamen non *habet secum* id quod significat, ut gratiam invisibilem, quia aliquando tale signum potest adhiberi nolenti, vel ficte accedenti, ut Sacramentum Baptismi, et tunc non necessario habet secum quod signat propter impedimentum, *non sui quia quantum est ex se, semper habet secum gratiam invisibilem quam significat,* sed propter impedimentum recipientis. Istud enim signum ita est et efficax, licet ad placitum, quod semper *habet secum* quod signat, et non quod quandoque non inest, sed *semper inest quantum est ex se.*"[103] The doctrine concerning "signa pratica" in relation to the Sacraments could hardly be given more clearly.[104]

3. If we look for the reason of this infallible connection between the cause and effect; the signum and the signatum; the materia remota, proxima, and forma on one hand and grace on the other, we shall find it to be the institution of Christ, Who, as it were, pledges Himself to impart sanctifying grace and the corresponding sacramental grace to everyone receiving the Sacrament worthily, and this ex opere operato, or to use a Scotistic expression "quantum ex se." This pledge or promise on the part of God is called by the Scholastics a *"Pactio Divina"* and is ex-

Pactio Divina

101 D. I. q. II. Sch. I. n. 5.
102 D. I. q. II. Sch. I. n. 4.
103 L. c.
104 Cf. Mueller, l. c., p. 151, 189, 231.

pressed by the words "auctoritate Dei posita." As a confirmation of the aforesaid we quote the following: "Ad secundam quaestionem dico quod non est virtus absoluta in Sacramento (i. e., physica, as is evident from the foregoing argument which Scotus in this passage rejects) sed solum signum ordinatum et institutum a Deo efficaciter repræsentans formam principalem, et suum signatum ut quandoque (quicumque?) id signum recipiat sine fictione, fiat amicus Dei, et acceptetur a Deo per gratiam, et quandocumque id fit in aliquo illi assistet Deus; ut insit quod designat."[105] He speaks still more clearly in D. I, q. IV, Sch. IV:" "Susceptio Sacramenti est quaedam dispositio necessitans ad gratiam ex *pactione divina qua Deus pepigit* assistere Sacramentis; ut conferrent quod signant, et non habet tantum rationem receptivi respectu gratiae." Speaking of the ceremonies of the old Law he says: "Ceremoniae illae, quae non sunt sacramenta—nec ex *pactione divina,* nec etiam ex virtute propria conferebant gratiam."[106]

Although the defenders of the theory "sine quibus non" likewise and frequently make use of the expression "pactio divina," they have a different viewpoint than Scotus. For according to their theory, this divine assistance and this pledge are, as we have seen above, the sole cause of the sacramental grace, whereas, according to Scotus, the "pactio divina" is indeed the causa principalis but not the only cause, i. e., to the exclusion of every instrumental cause. The expression "pactio divina," as employed by Scotus, merely signifies what the defenders of all theories are forced to admit, namely, that the Sacraments have their efficacy by and in virtue of the institution by Christ. This is what Scotus means when he says the sacraments are "signa ad placitum," i. e., chosen and adopted by Christ, and not "naturalia," i. e., of themselves efficacious apart from the institution by Christ. "Deus sacramentum instituit, ut esset signum ex instituente ad placitum verum et efficax et demonstrativum."[107]

4) The fourth element of Scotus' doctrine is that the reception of the sacrament is, eo ipso, *an exigency for grace* without an effectus praevius—or put differently, the sacraments produce

105 D. I. q. IV. Sch. V.
106 D. I. q. IV. Sch. 4.
107 D. I. q. II. Sch. I.

Dispositio Exigens Gratiam

grace *"immediate"* and not *"mediate."*[108] This element in Scotus' teaching will now be more fully illustrated by his own words: the reception of the sacrament is a *"dispositio exigens gratiam."* "Susceptio Sacramenti," says Scotus, "est quaedam dispositio necessitans gratiam ex pactione divina, qua Deus pepigit assistere Sacramentis, ut conferrent quod signant, et non habet tantum rationem receptivi respectu gratiae."[109] He again refers to this when he rejects the effectus prævius of the earlier Scholastics. "Nec ista dispositio activa respectu formae substantialis *causat aliquam dispositionem aliam a se respectu illius substantiae,* sed *per illam violentam activitatem quam habet, agit ad inductionem* illius substantiae. Similiter in proposito."[110] Finally, Scotus refers to this in the above quoted passage concerning human generation: "Dico autem quod aqua *cor abluit dispositive* ut patet in sequentibus; sic enim homo generans hominem, secundum corpus perfecte organicum, quodammodo dispositive agit ad inductionem ultimae formae hominis (animae) quia sic statuit Deus, ut natura agente in ultimum, in quod potest, Deus perficiat, et suppleat quod deficit. Ita potest vere dici sacramentum Baptismi dispositive agere gratiam, quia sic pepigit Deus cum ecclesia, ut quandocumque esset tale signum efficaciter signans signatum, quod datur in Sacramento, Deus assisteret ad dandum quod signum significat."[111] The same follows from, and is included in, the above mentioned example of merit which certainly denotes an exigency for a reward.

The *nexus* or the relation between the reception of the sacrament and grace is, according to Scotus, *not physical.* This is likewise evident from the two examples just referred to. A father does not physically produce the soul, which owing to its simplicity is philosophically impossible, neither does merit physically produce the wages or reward. (The money is physically produced by the mint, and the premium, e. g., a book or medal, by the manufacturers who print or cast it). Scotus calls the relation between the signum and signatum, sacrament and grace, in contradistinction to the physical, a *relatio rationis.* "Sacramentum enim est signum formaliter, et *relatio rationis,* et refertur ad invisibilem

Relatio Rationis

108 Cf. III. Part. 5.
109 D. I. q. IV. Sch. IV.
110 D. I. q. IV. Sch. IV.
111 D. I. q. I. Sch. IV.

gratiam, *ut correlativum* et signatum."[112] More explicitly in the same D. III. p. II Sch. I and II. "Dico quod possumus loqui de forma alicujus proprie vel appropriate. Si proprie sic dico quod uniuscujusque forma est illud a quo essentialiter et formaliter est id, quod est, ut aliquis est albus per albedinem, et iste modo dico quod forma Baptismi si propria est, quod est quaedam *relatio rationis,* ut signum efficax veraciter demonstrans et signans ablutionem animae a peccato, tamquam suum proprium correlativum et signatum; quae relatio rationis, vel quod signum, est in omnibus praedicitis, in aqua, in verbis, etc., sicut in suo fundamento."

Examples of Scotus

In order to illustrate this relation more clearly Scotus uses the following examples: "Ad istum ergo effectum invisibilem in anima significandum efficaciter, potest Deus instituere aliquid signum, quod illud efficaciter repræsentet, quia etiam nos hoc possumus. Nam et nos significantes voluntates nostras de aliquo esse firmas, et in aliquo firmari, statuimus et facimus signa, quae illos certidudinaliter et efficaciter repæsentant. Patet in sponsionibus, fideijussionibus, juramentis et hujusmodi pactionibus."[113] That is to say just as a juridical relation is established between two persons in a contract, so also between the sacraments and God. God has made, so to say, a contract, a "pactio divina," as the Scholastics were wont to call it, with the Church, whereby He, on His part, will always be willing to confer grace as often as the recipients of the sacraments, on their part, will fulfill the other share of the contract, i. e., use these fountains of grace faithfully and conscientiously, i. e., without placing an obex. The nexus or relation, therefore, between the sacrament and grace is a juridical one, according to the second class of signa practica."[114]

Examples of St. Bernard

By a "signum practicum" of the second class, we mean one by which, e. g., decorations, offices, and charges are not only signified, but also, by virtue of the intelligence and will of the one conferring the same, granted, imposed and given. Thus, for example, through an official document of the President, one is appointed Ambassador to a certain country; through a few words of the College Dean or Chancellor an academic degree

112 D. III. q. 1. Sch. I.
113 D. I. q. II. Sch. I.
114 By the first class of signa practica is meant any motive for performing or omitting an action. Cf. Mueller, l. c., p. 151.

is conferred; through a Papal Brief the jurisdiction over a certain Diocese is granted. In a similar manner contracts are written, especially those known as "consensuales;" promises, made; oaths taken and pledges given. It is exactly in this manner that Scotus claims the sacraments confer grace, i. e., "ad normam signorum practicorum secundi generis."[115] After having offered several arguments, in the form of objections, tending to prove the causalitas physica, Scotus says: "Contra Bernardus in sermone de coena Domini: 'Sicut investitur Canonicus per librum, Abbas per baculum, Episcopus per annulum sic divisiones gratiarum diversis sunt traditae sacramentis."[116] Whenever the Scholastics, after having mentioned certain objections which they afterwards solve, say "sed contra est," and then cite the words of some authority we can take for granted that their opinion coincides with that of the author referred to; otherwise there would have been no reason for citing his opinion. So also here. It is evident, however, in the above given examples of St. Bernard, there can be no question of a causalitas physica, but only of a causalitas moralis or causalitas juridica. Scotus for all that says the same. "Sed liber non est causa efficiens Praebendae, nec annulus Episcopatus; ergo nec Sacramentum est causa efficiens gratiae."[117] By these latter words Scotus, as has been said so often, does not wish to exclude every causality or efficacy, but only a "causalitas *physica*" against which he is arguing. Everyone will admit that a "causalitas *moralis*" or "*juridica*" is not excluded, especially if he recall the investiture proceedings of the Middle Ages. No one doubts that by the legitimate conferring of the ring and crozier a bishop was invested with jurisdiction, and thus obtained spiritual power over his flock; or that by the dubbing with a sword, a young man was knighted. Scotus maintains the same relation between the sacrament and grace.

Forma Repraesentans et Mutans

The subtle Doctor likewise speaks of this *juridical relationship* in those passages in which he speaks of the sacrament as a "forma." He makes this objection: "Sacramentum est forma exemplaris, aut forma informans? Non forma exemplaris, quia forma exemplaris non mutat id cujus est, ut exemplatum sed e converso. Sacramentum autem magis mutat gra-

115 Cf. Mueller, l. c., p. 151.
116 D. I. q. III. cf. St. Thomas—Summa III, q. 62, a. 1.
117 L. c.

tiam, quam e converso, ergo non est ejus exemplar. Nec forma informans, patet, quia verba non informant aquam ut manifestum; ergo, etc. (i. e., Sacramentum non est forma visibilis invisibilis gratiae)."[118] Scotus answers the objection thus: "Ad aliud, patet quod non accipitur ibi forma pro forma informante, nec pro forma exemplari, sed pro *forma repraesentante et mutante* signatum et demonstratum et ita proceditur ibi ab insufficienti, et fit ibi fallacia consequentiae."[119] What Scotus understands by this "forma repraesentans et mutans" he explains in the following words: "Cum enim accipitur in illa definitione (Sci. Magistri), quod Sacramentum est 'visibilis forma;' forma non accipitur ibi pro forma informante et parte essentiali compositi, sed pro forma declarante et mutante, et sic accipitur ibi *pro relatione signi ad signatum,"* and further on: "Sacramentum est invisibilis gratiae visibilis forma, i. e., *signum* sensibile, non quodcumque sed ex institutione veraciter et demonstrative *gratiam signans invisibilem;* et hanc definitionem expressit Magister cum dicit quod proprie Sacramentum dicitur 'signum invisibilis gratiae, ut ejus imaginem gerat et causa existat,' i. e., *efficaciter* eam signans et *repraesentans."*[120]

The Sacraments therefore produce grace not physically: but in the manner we have set forth, i. e., exigetive and as "signa practica secundi generis."

5. We are now ready to take up the last but not least important point, i. e., how does the doctrine of Scotus differ from that of St. Thomas? Scotus calls the reception of the Sacraments a "dispositio immediate necessitans ad gratiam" whereas St. Thomas requires an "effectus praevius." St. Thomas teaches that the Sacraments effect grace only *"mediate."* This "effectus praevius" in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, is the character. In the other sacraments it is either, according to the older Scholastics, the "ornatus animae" or, according to others, the juridical relation between the reception of the sacraments and grace. Scotus denies this "effectus praevius" as a "terminus medius" between the sacrament and grace. He says the *reception of the sacrament itself* is a "dispositio necessitans ad gratiam," and that the juridical relation between the sacrament and grace is not to be found in the "effectus praevius" but

Scotus and St. Thomas

118 D. I. q. II.
119 D. I. q. II. Sch. II.
120 Ib.

rather in the reception of the sacrament proper by virtue of the "pactio divina." That the very reception of the Sacrament is a *dispositio immediata* Scotus teaches in the following passages: "Ad primam Augustini de aqua (i. e., 'tanta est virtus aquae, ut corpus tangat et cor abluat') dico non discordando (per transenam, in the same manner therefore that Augustine teaches a true causality, so likewise Scotus) vel glossando, quod tinctio corporis ab aqua cum verbis simul, vere cor abluit, non quod actione sua attingat gratiam vel dispositionem ad eam, sed quod sit ipsa ablutio exterior "*immediata dispositio* ad gratiam, ut *secum habens* quod signat; nec video necessitatem ponendi aliam dispositionem et ideo fugio pluralitatem."[121] "Entia non sunt multiplicanda sine necessitate" is the gist of the argument. In justice to St. Thomas, however, we repeat that this opinion of an "effectus praevius" was no longer taught by the Angelic Doctor in his later work, the "Summa."

Scotus treats the same matter more explicitly in Sch. IV n. 8. "Respondeo ergo . . . . sicut tu (St. Thomas) ponis virtutem in aqua posse creare aliquam dispositionem in anima respectu gratiae effective, ita ego pono ablutionem aquae et linitationem olei cum verbis esse *immediatam dispositionem* ad gratiam active." In these passages Scotus by no means wishes to deny the "res et sacramentum" or the character,[122] but only that grace is conferred *by virtue of this character,* i. e., *"mediate."* It is also for this very reason that Scotus, consistently with his theory, teaches that the character is not the cause that grace revives (reviviscentia sacramentorum) after the "obex" has been removed: "Respondeo quod fictione recedente statim recepit gratiam baptismalem gratiam quam etiam recepisset in Baptismo nisi obex fictionis tunc infuisset, non quia character impressus in baptizato aliquid disponat vel agat ad susceptionem gratiae, ut dicit Richardus; sed Deus ex eadem pactione, qua assistet suo signo efficienti, ad conferendam gratiam, si fictio tunc temporis non fuisset, eamdem confert gratiam fictione recedente, quod fuit impedimentum quare non infuit."[123] The character and the grace are infused simultaneously in one who receives the sacraments worthily, without this relation of the character as an exigency of grace.

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121 D. I. q. IV. Sch. V.
122 Cf. D. VI. q. 8. Sch. II.
123 D. IV. q. V. Sch. I.; Cf. D. VI., q. VIII. Sc. I. n. 7.

Although admitting that at least in so far as the three sacraments which imprint a character are concerned, the doctrine of St. Thomas is very plausible, especially because by it the "reviviscentia sacramentorum" is easily explained, we do not believe that merely on these grounds the opinion of Scotus concerning a direct influence should be rejected. Scotus for all that likewise defends the "reviviscentia sacramentorum" without resorting to an effectus praevius or to this relation between the character and grace. However, it is not our intention in this treatise to defend Scotus' theory. We wish only to give it as it appears to us to be most consistent with his words and teachings.

Reviviscentia Sacramentorum

Thus we believe we have demonstrated (1) that Scotus taught a true "causalitas sacramentorum," and that "ex opere operato" despite the assertions of his opponents to the contrary; (2) that correspondingly Scotus did not and logically could not teach that the sacraments are merely "causae sine quibus non;" but (3) that the sacraments possess a juridical causality according to the manner of "signa practica secundi generis," not by virtue of an "effectus praevius" but "immediate," and on account of a divine promise (pactio divina). According to Scotus, the sacraments do not effect grace physically as the locomotive produces speed.

It is difficult at any rate to conceive how a tangible object, as the matter and form of the sacraments, can exert a physical influence on a spiritual entity like grace.[124] Theologians even find it very hard to explain how the fire in hell can torture the *souls* of the damned. The sacraments do not produce their effect morally, that is, the pouring of the water on the head of the child, e. g., is not objectively speaking an influence on God to infuse sanctifying grace. The sacraments are, thirdly, not merely "conditiones sine quibus non" as, e. g., the Rector of a Seminary who promises to let the Seminarians attend the opening base-ball game of the season, provided all of them pass the mid-year examination. The examination is only a condition but has absolutely no influence on the base-ball game. The

124 Cf. Mueller, l. c., 157; cf. S. Thom. p. III q. 62 q. 1 ad. 2. In his Summa St. Thomas says: "Sacramenta corporalia per propriam operationem quam exercent circa corpus quod tangunt, efficiunt operationem instrumentalem ex virtute divina circa animam, sicut aqua baptismi abluendo corpus secundum propriam virtutem abluit animam, in quantum est instrumentum virtutis divinae."

game will be played irrespective of the fact whether the Seminarians passed or failed in the examination. Some authors claimed that Scotus looked upon the Sacraments merely as such passive conditions for the infusion of grace without positively exerting any influence on its infusion. This we deny.

In our opinion Scotus taught none of these three theories. His theory is this: As a public instrument or document is the means by which an official is appointed and a title conferred; as by the bestowal of miter and crozier a bishop is invested with spiritual jurisdiction; as by the pronouncing of certain words with uplifted hands an oath is taken, so likewise are the sacraments the means by which God wishes to confer His graces. By an act of His divine will He concurs with the placing of the external signs and thus grace is produced. This concurrence is the result of His divine mercy and promise; for God has pledged Himself, so to speak, to bestow grace as often as these outward signs are placed. The placing of the outward signs thereupon produces in the soul a disposition, to use Scotus's expression, which has a right to grace, in fact can demand it, just as merit has a right to a reward, and the laborer a right to his stipulated pay. These external signs, e. g., ablution, anointing, etc., not only signify but also produce spiritual cleaning and fortitude, and for that reason are called "signa practica." Because these external sacramental signs always place such an exigency for grace as long as no impediment (mortal sin—obex) is present, they are said to produce grace "ex opere operato." Grace, however, is produced, not by means of any intermediary instrument (the "effectus praevius") but directly. The Sacrament of Baptism, e. g., does not first produce the character, and the character in turn grace, but both grace and chracter are produced simultaneously.

We believe for that reason to be able to conclude with Sasse: "Scotum (IV. d. I, q 5.) quem ejus discipuli communi sententia sequuntur contrarium esse efficientiae Sacramentorum physicae apud omnes in confesso est. Revera disserte negat eis adscribendam esse actionem proprie dictam qua attingant vel ipsam gratiam vel dispositionem praeviam ad gratiam. Porro docet Sacramenta non esse causas dumtaxat per accidens sed aliquo modo causas activas per se instrumentales gratiae. Hanc quidem causalitatem in eo reponit, quod Sacramenta ex divina institutione sint dispositiones

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immediatae (exterae) quibus positis necessario confertur gratia. Sed quidquid de hoc modo loquendi senseris, certe ad rem ipsam quod attinet, Doctor Subtilis hac explicatione veram causalitatem eamque moralem (we would prefer to say "juridicam") significare voluit, ut elucet ex comparatione Sacramentorum cum meritis, quae similiter causam instrumentalem esse ait per modum dispositionis respectu praemii. Atque hoc sensu Scotistae communiter suum Magistrum intelligunt."[125]

125 De Sac. I, 79.

THE TEACHING OF VEN. JOHN DUNS SCOTUS

CONCERNING THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF OUR LADY

VINCENT MAYER, O. M. C.

THE present sketch does not attempt to offer an exhaustive account of the doctrine of the Subtle Doctor concerning the Immaculate Conception. As a matter of fact, Scotus never intended to adduce stringent arguments and proofs for the Immaculate Conception, since the belief in Our Lady's sinlessness and her freedom from original sin was in his time sufficiently established. What he was chiefly concerned with, was to remove those difficulties which prevented the scientifico-theological acceptance of this belief. That Scotus succeeded in his object is beyond all doubt. It is hoped that these few pages may to some extent at least show how he accomplished his purpose.

Scotus' Defence of the Immaculate Conception

Toward the end of the thirteenth century the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady seemed to have suffered a backset (Cfr. Koesters, S. J., *Maria die unbefleckt Empfangene,* p. 104.) From a theological standpoint the doctrine was still faced with several serious difficulties or objections. Even the great Aquinas had been unable to dispose of them. Those theologians, therefore, who opposed the doctrine were thus excusable and perchance their opposition was instrumental in preventing the enthusiasm of the other school from developing into fantastic extremes with regard to this beautiful privilege of the Mother of God.

The belief in the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady was by no means stifled by the opposition of the theologians. It was but a question of time before this doctrine would assert itself with perfect assurance. The theological difficulties which stood in its way were apparently serious enough, but not insurmountable. The happy solution was found by John Duns Scotus, the learned Franciscan Friar, whose keenness of intellect earned for him the title "Doctor Subtilis."

Schwabe, in his *History of Dogma,* vol. IV, p. 178, says of Scotus, that this theologian rendered his greatest service when he stood forth as the standard-bearer in the defence and establish-

ment of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, inasmuch as he proposed the correct solution of the apparent difficulties against it.

Let us see how well-founded is this praise.

Reconciling Two Doctrines

Before the days of Duns Scotus even the greatest minds seemed nonplussed by the difficulty of reconciling a dogma of the Church with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God. (We may, perhaps, except St. Augustine, who by urging the doctrine of the *fullness* of grace in Mary may have implied that this fullness of grace excluded or expelled original sin.) The dogma which caused the difficulty was the accepted teaching of the Church concerning the universal need of Redemption, for in Adam we have all sinned (Rom. V.) Scotus removed the misgivings of theologians by solving the apparent contradiction between this established and accepted dogma and the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

Scotus treats this difficulty in *Quaestiones in Lib. III Sent.*, d. III., quaest. 1. "Utrum Beata Virgo fuerit concepta in originali peccato?" He himself states the objections very clearly and fairly: 1) In Adamo omnes peccaverunt, quia in eo fuerunt secundum rationem seminalem; ita fuit in eo Beata Virgo. Igitur, etc. 2) Damascenus, *de Fide Orthodoxa,* dicit: Spiritus Sanctus purgavit eam; purgatio autem non est nisi a peccato; igitur habuit peccatum, non actuale, igitur, etc. 3) Augustinus, *de Fide ad Petrum*: Firmissime tene et nullatenus dubites omnem qui per concubitum viri et mulieris concipitur, cum peccato originali nasci. (Scotus remarks that Augustine excepts the Mother of God, and develops a text to this effect.) Scotus expresses the difficulty again (D. III. quaest. 1. n. 14.) in this wise: "Quod quilibet filius Adæ naturaliter est debitor iustitiæ originalis, et ex demerito Adæ caret ea, et ideo omnis talis habet unde contrahat peccatum originale." These texts fairly express the objections which had baffled the theologians.

The solution offered by the Franciscan Friar is this: While accepting the sentence that every descendant of Adam by reason of the sin of Adam lacks original justice, he proceeds to say: "si alicui in primo instanti creationis animæ detur gratia, ille licet careat iustitia originali, numquam tamen est debitor eius, quia merito alterius *praevenientis* peccatum datur sibi gratia quæ æquivalet illi iustitiæ quantum ad acceptationem divinam, imo

excedit; ergo quantum est ex se, quilibet haberet peccatum originale, nisi alius præveniret merendo."

Therefore, according to Scotus, at the very moment of conception there was given to Our Lady, through the merits of the Redeemer, a grace like unto original justice, in fact surpassing it.

Scotus repeats this doctrine in *Quaest. in Lib III,* d. III, quæst. 1., n. 9.: "Potuit enim Deus in primo instanti illius animæ infundere sibi gratiam tantam, quantam alii animæ in circumcisione vel baptismo; igitur in illo instanti anima non habuisset peccatum originale, sicut nec habuisset si postea fuisset baptizata."

The teaching of the Church declaring the universal "sinfulness" of the descendants of Adam is upheld, because Scotus ascribes also to Mary the lack of original justice, but this only *natura prius quam infusio illius gratiae praecaventis.* Now that which is said to be *natura prius,* as Scotus explains, is not actually present, because at the same time its opposite is present; "quod dicitur prius natura non inest, quia in eodem instanti oppositum inest; sed dicitur prius natura quia tunc inesset quantum est ex parte subiecti, nisi aliquid extrinsecum impediret." (Dist. III, quæst. 1., n. 15.) This "aliquid extrinsecum impediens" is the mediation of Christ, the Redeemer.

Thus did Scotus also solve the other difficulty which had been found in the accepted teaching of theologians and which the Subtle Doctor states in L. III, d. III, q. 1., schol. 3.: "Ipse (Christus) enim ut Redemptor universalis omnibus ianuam aperuit; sed si Beata Virgo non contraxisset peccatum originale, non indiguisset redemptore, . . . non enim clauditur (ianua) nisi propter peccatum, et maxime originale." The great Franciscan points out that Our Lady had need of the Redeemer even in a greater degree than the rest of the descendants of Adam. Mary by reason of her common descent from Adam ("ex ratione propagationis communis") would have contracted the original stain, if this had not been prevented by the grace of the Mediator Christ Jesus. Since the rest of mankind stood in need of Christ, so that through His merits there might be remitted the sin which they had already incurred, so much the more did Our Lady require the intervention of the Redeemer to save her from incurring this original sin. "Ita illa magis indiguit mediatore præveniente, peccatum ne esset ab ipsa aliquando contrahendum, et ne ipsa contraheret." (In L. III, d. III, q. 1. n. 14.)

As we have here the real crux of the question it may be advisable to quote both the difficulty and its solution at greater

length. We find it in *L. III.* d. 3. q. 1. scholium n, 15. "Et si arguas quia prius naturaliter fuit (Maria) filia Adæ, quia prius fuit persona quam habens gratiam; in illo igitur priori tenebatur ad iustitiam originalem quia naturalis filia Adæ, et non habuit eam; ergo in illo priori contraxit originale peccatum." In solving this objection Scotus makes the distinction we quoted above, namely that Our Lady was only *natura prius filia Adae quam habens illam gratiam praecaventem,* and we have seen that this does not imply any actual or real precedence. Scotus offers an illustration. "Si materia comparatur ad formam et ad privationem (formæ), prius naturaliter est materia non habens formam, non quod in illo instanti in quo habet formam, realiter non habeat eam, quia tunc contradictoria essent simul; sed quia tunc materia quantum est ex se, dimissa sibi, non haberet formam, si alium habens non daret." Thus though matter naturally is lacking form before it is formed, it does not follow that actually matter ever exists without form. Scotus then goes on to say that, although matter may be considered to be by nature something in itself before it is either lacking form or having form, it does not follow that matter ever actually exists in this wise: "Non tamen sequitur quod ipsa (materia) aliquando sit in se, ita quod nec sub privatione nec sub forma." The great theologian then makes the application to the problem in question: "Ita in proposito dico quod natura animæ præcedit naturaliter iustitiam originalem sive gratiam æquivalentem et carentiam iustitiæ debitæ, et etiam in illa natura præcedit naturaliter carentia illa iustitiæ originalis illam iustitiam, quia quantum est ex subiecto quod est prius naturaliter utroque opposito (i. e. privationi et formæ nempe gratiæ), prius naturaliter privatio inesset, tamen non oportet animam esse aliquando sub neutro extremo, neque prius esse sub privatione quam sub opposito."

The further application follows very naturally. Mary was ("natura prius") a daughter of Adam by nature before she was justified; consequently before she possessed the grace of original justice. It does not, however, follow, that in that instant she was actually deprived of original justice: "Non sequitur ergo in illo instanti naturæ fuit privata, loquendo de omnino primo instanti, quia secundum illam primitiam, natura animæ ita naturaliter præcessit privationem iustitiæ, sicut ipsam iustitiam." Scotus says we have but the right to infer that in considering the nature (of Mary), which is the source and foundation of her descent from Adam, there is included in it neither original justice,

nor its want. Consequently, since all these precedences are merely speculative, theoretical, "ratione et natura," Scotus declares there is no real difficulty in the opinion of those who say that Our Lady was first of all a daughter of Adam and then freed from the lack of original justice, for being *natura* a daughter of Adam and *ratione naturae* lacking original justice do not constitute an *actual* moment before the granting to her of original justice through the merits of the Redeemer.

Even the ordinary mind realizes in this conclusion the doctrine which now seems to us so clear and simple, but which was until the days of Scotus an unsolved difficulty. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was by nature subject to the universal law or curse of original sin. But by a special privilege, granted to her through the (foreseen) merits of the Redeemer who would be born of her, Mary was preserved from actually incurring the stain. Christ was also her Redeemer, for He it was Who, by His merits, brought it about that Mary in the very moment of her conception was granted the grace which was equal, or even superior to original justice, the lack of which constitutes original sin.

Further Reasons in Support of Scotus' View

It may be of interest to add a few more reasons which Scotus gives in support of his teaching (In *Lib. III,* d. III, q. 1. n. 4.) It can be argued, says Scotus, from the very transcendent superiority of her Son, considered as the Redeemer, Reconciler and Mediator, that Mary did not incur original sin. The most perfect mediator has a perfect act of mediation in respect of some person to whom he is a mediator; now Christ is the perfect mediator; therefore Christ must have the highest possible degree of mediation towards some person, with regard to whom He is mediator. However, to none did Christ stand in a higher degree as mediator than to His Mother. Now this would not be realized if He had not merited for her this preservation from original sin.

Scotus argues here from the premises that Christ is the most perfect mediator. It is not our purpose to give his reasons, as it is not our intention to subject the teaching of Scotus to a critical examination, but merely to set forth his doctrine concerning the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God. Scotus probably takes into consideration the divine nature of Christ. That Scotus does not declare the manner of our redemption to be the most perfect way possible is clear from the following. Scotus gives it as his opinion that as Christ is the most perfect mediator, He had it in power to apply the most perfect mediation. The

most perfect degree of mediation consists in that Christ should not only free someone from sin, but that he should preserve at least one person from sin.

This opinion is explained further by an example, which is very similar to an illustration found in St. Anselm, *Cur Deus homo,* 1. 2. A certain man had offended the king to such an extent that the king made not only the offender but also his children feel the royal displeasure, and dispossessed them all. The punishment would be remitted only if an innocent person rendered to the king a service which would be considered greater than the offence committed. Now a mediator succeeds to the extent that the king will no longer deprive the children of the offender of their inheritance, yet leaves them under his displeasure, though later on he forgives them for the sake of the merits of that mediator. Now, says Scotus, if this mediator could so appease the king, that he could prevent any offence being taken by the king in respect to some particular child of the original offender, the mediator would be far more excellent than to induce the king to forgive after taking offence. And this, says our Doctor Subtilis, is not at all impossible, since the offence given by this individual is not through his own fault, but through an inherited one. It will be best to give the very words of Scotus: "Nullus ergo summe vel perfectissime placat aliquem pro offensa alicuius contrahenda nisi posset prævenire, ne ille offendatur, nam si iam offensum placat, ut remittat, non perfectissime placat. Igitur Christus non perfectissime placat Trinitatem pro culpa contrahenda a filiis Adæ, si non præveniat, ut alicui Trinitas non offendatur, et per consequens quod anima alicuius filii Adæ non habeat culpam talem." (In *L. III,* d. III, q. 1. n. 5.) For if there is sin, the Trinity must necessarily be offended.

This explanation is rightly applied to Our Lady, since Scotus expressly treats of the Immaculate Conception in this portion of his teaching.

Christ as the perfect mediator possessed the power to preserve a descendant, or the descendants of Adam from original sin. It was befitting that He should exercise this power in at least one case, just as it behooved God to give at least one manifestation of His Omnipotence, and which He gave in the creation of the world *ex nihilo.*

We may add that it seemed right and meet to preserve Our Lady from incurring original sin, so that no link in the chain of this particular mediation be missing. The descendants of Adam

are generally cleansed from original sin after their birth. A few, like St. John the Baptist, were sanctified and cleansed in their mother's womb. Christ, the God-man, was *a priori* free from original sin, and thus it was befitting that a child of Adam, who by its nature would have incurred the original stain, should by virtue of the merits of the Redeemer be preserved from that stain. Scotus himself odes not elaborate the conclusion that Christ should extend this most perfect form of mediation to Our Lady, no doubt because the reason in favor of Our Lady seemed so conclusive that he presumed no one would doubt it. Scotus therefore simply asserts the conclusion without giving proofs.

There is no purpose in giving the reasons why it behooved that this privilege be given to Our Lady in preference to any one else. These reasons are too well known to need repetition. It may, however, be of interest to consider a few more reasons given by Scotus why it behooved the Redeemer to preserve at least one descendant of Adam from original sin: "Primo, quia perfectissimus mediator meretur amotionem omnis pœnæ ab eo quem reconciliat; sed culpa originalis est maior pœna quam ipsa carentia visionis divinæ." (Cfr. In *Lib. II,* d. 36.) Sin, says Scotus, is the greatest affliction or punishment of an intelligent being. It is moreover argued, he continues, that Christ seemed to be more directly *(immediatius)* our Redeemer with regard to original sin than actual sin. Yet it is generally assumed that Christ was a perfect Mediator with regard to one person *(puta Mariam)* to such a degree that He preserved her from all actual sin; therefore, in like manner from original sin. This may suffice to demonstrate the teaching of Duns Scotus concerning the Immaculate Conception.

In conclusion it might be remarked that to some minds it may appear a very natural thing that Scotus should be found teaching the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception with such assurance in contrast with his predecessors. It is often assumed that Scotus is the deliberate opponent of St. Thomas. Such an assumption would be false. Scotus did not follow a deliberate tendency to differ from the great Dominican. The natural intellectual acuteness of the Franciscan Theologian brought in its train a certain independence of spirit, and these two qualities led him to seek new and original trains of thought, which happily led to original and true conclusions. Scotus never mentions St. Thomas even when he opposes opinions held and defended by the Angelic Doctor. Hurter, in his *Nomenclator,* II, col. 363,

says of Scotus, that he went aside from the older theologians, such as Thomas, Richard of St. Victor, etc., "quia sagacissimi ingenii erat, sed absque studio et ira, tranquille et solius veritatis inquirendæ vel determinandæ ratione habita."

Orthodoxy of the Subtle Doctor

A Franciscan may be pardoned for adding that it is not dangerous to follow John Duns Scotus despite the fact that the Doctor Subtilis does not always agree with the great Angelic Doctor. A Roman Congregation by order of Paul V declared "immunem esse a censuris doctrinam Scoti," and ordered that none dare refuse permission to print whatever "certo constaret ex Scoto depromptum esse." (Cfr. Hurter, l. c.)

But in the particular matter of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception the Jesuit Koesters has justly said *(Maria, die unbefleckt Empfangene,* p. 104): "It is the enduring achievement of the great Franciscan John Duns Scotus that he dispelled the hard frost of theological misgivings, and thus brought it about that the bud of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which was even then perfectly formed, should open up and disclose its wondrous beauty."

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